City Drops Charges Against Newsmen

By William N. Curry
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The corporation counsel's office yesterday dropped disorderly conduct charges against two newspapermen arrested during last week's antiwar demonstrations.

The arrest of one of the reporters, David K. Shipler of The New York Times, led to an article in Monday's editions of the Times in which Shipler said cellblock police held protesters for nine hours in cells containing puddles of water while dry cells stood empty.

Metropolitan police inspector Karol Kratochvil, who is in charge of the cellblock, said a prisoner flushed a stopped-up commode until it flooded. He acknowledged that some suspects got wet as a result.

As for the long delay in releasing those who posted collateral, Kratochvil said there was a shortage of manpower. He noted that the cellblock was used for arrested demonstrators and the usual Saturday night arrests.

"We just didn't have enough manpower to give each person individual attention," he said.

Robert H. Campbell, the chief assistant corporation counsel at the Court of General Sessions said yesterday, "I don't feel we could make a case of disorderly conduct against (Shipler). There were no overt acts of violence."

Shipler, 26, said yesterday he was taking notes at 12th Street and Constitution Avenue NW. about 6 p.m. Saturday when he was arrested by Officer W. C. Battle.

Shipler said there might have been people on the corner near him but that he was not mingling with the protesters.

Campbell also said there was no case against Phil Finch, 21, a Washington Daily News sports reporter arrested Friday night, also by Officer Battle, during troubles at Dupont Circle.

In an article Saturday, Finch wrote that he was looking for a friend and was not on assignment when he was caught up in confusion and tear gas, and was arrested. He forfeited $10 collateral that night.

David Stolberg, managing editor of the News, accompanied Finch to a hearing with Campbell yesterday. Stolberg said he had a "paternalistic" interest in Finch.

"I did not want him to have a record," Stolberg said. "He should have told them he was a reporter sooner. He didn't . . . until he was asked to his occupation" at the precinct.

During the three days of antiwar demonstrations last week, which brought some 250,000 people to the District, 87 persons were charged with disorderly conduct. Campbell said yesterday he has also dropped charges against a third person, a young demonstrator from Portland, Ore., who was arrested with Shipler by Officer Battle.

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DJAKARTA, Nov. 19— nesian customs officers arrested several men ing the seizure of hur Chinese-made s a u marked with the h sickle, it was repo